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### **Abstract**

Diana Spencer, Kate Middleton, and Meghan Markle are widely known worldwide. These women are not only popular for their style, beauty, and personalities but for a reason behind their start being famous, fitting into the Royal Family of the United Kingdom by marrying princes in the well-known family. As a result, Diana, Kate, and Meghan have all had the spotlight on them throughout their time as members of the Royal Family, which prompted the constant attention and variety of viewpoints in and from the British media programs. In this essay, I contend using the visual rhetoric criticism and feminist rhetorical analysis that Diana, Kate, and Meghan have been subjected to the strict rules of being a member of the royal family but having the media constantly frame them into the representations of ordinary women when they are new to the customs of being a royal.

## Introduction

When most girls hear the word princess, some think of prince charming to save them from evil. In the real world, princesses with their prince charming would be known for their beauty, passion, and elegance.

When the paparazzi are always after celebrities of all kinds of genres, more celebrities are getting their photos taken to show their actions. The Royal Family has been around for ages and has been in the spotlight of the British press ever since the start of the camera. The Royal Family members have their specific duties as Queens, Princes, Dukes, and Duchess' but these people communicate with the world through their style and personalities to prove that they are ordinary individuals. The Royal Family has significantly inspired the public's ideas and decisions throughout their lives, such as Princess Diana Spencer, Duchess Kate Middleton, and Meghan Markle. They are held up as shining idols in the British press. These three women of the Royal Family are known worldwide and have always been analyzed. Events in these women's lives as they married into the Royal Family provoked tons of attention from the British media and the public.

In this rhetorical analysis, using visual rhetorical criticism and rhetorical feminist analysis, I will analyze how the British media has represented these three women. Through the rhetorical criticisms of the aspect of visuals by Sonia Foss and the feminist analysis, I will be able to connect the dots and comprehend the information about the British media's obsessiveness with these three women. Before getting into the research, we will look at previous work completed on each rhetorical criticism in the backdrop of Diana, Kate, and Meghan's appearances and actions while being Royal Family members.

In this paper, I claim that the British media system replicated and projected the same examination and capacity of being that society provides ordinary women, particularly those not blood relatives of the royal family. Feminist critique demonstrates that feminists are interested in reconsidering gendered concepts and actions. I believe Diana, Kate, and Meghan have firsthand knowledge of the royal family's rules. We can be encouraged to assess the aims of a picture, its effect, and its symbolic significance using the visual rhetoric approach to images.

### **Context**

The British Monarchy is one of the oldest established political systems globally. It all started in 1603 when James VI and James I became the first king to govern jointly over England, Scotland, and Ireland. This form of the United Kingdom government has become popular over the past 2000 years with its traditional and historical values. It is critical to understand the context surrounding the Royal Family and the importance of each member before we get into more detail, so we can examine what's already there and what's necessary to know. There is already a great deal of context that exists with the members of the Royal Family, such as background information about each son or daughter of Queen Elizabeth and her husband, Prince Phillip, the marriage and divorce of Prince Charles and Diana Spencer, the famous wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and the timing of the exit of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

Diana Spencer, Kate Middleton, and Meghan Markle have been widely recognized beautiful women that have had a significant influence on British media publications. Lady Diana was born July 1, 1961, in Sandringham, United Kingdom (Britannica). Kate Middleton was born in Reading, Berkshire, England, on January 9, 1982 (Biography). On August 4, 1981, Meghan

Markle was born in Los Angeles, California, the United States (Haynes). These three members of Princesses and Duchesses of the Royal Family started being in the British media when each woman started dating one of the princes, Queen Elizabeth II's son, Charles, or Diana's sons, William, and Harry.

After Diana's divorce from Prince Charles in the 1990s after confronting the ongoing affair he had with Diana, Diana retained her prominent public presence. She maintained her previously performed activities on behalf of charities, including the arts, children's concerns, and children with AIDS (Britannica). Just about fifteen years later, after his mother's passing, Prince William married Kate Middleton, becoming Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, in April 2011. Before getting married and meeting at St. Andrews University, the paparazzi caught Kate on the Royal Family ski trip (Biography), so Kate, like her mother-in-law, was in the press many times. Then, in July of 2016, Prince Harry met Meghan Markle, where *Suits*, the television series Meghan was part of, was shot. Ever since Meghan has been with Harry, she has experienced never-ending oppression from the British media (Haynes), relating to her mother- and sister-in-law.

These three women in the United Kingdom Monarchy represent royalty and ordinary women becoming known as ordinary women just like we are but have a princess or duchess title. So, the topic of analyzing these three beautiful and inspiring women, having their own stories, we women can inspire and help each other. That is what Diana, Kate, and Meghan are doing as they pursue their lives as Princesses and Duchess in the United Kingdom. Although an artifact already has a lot of information for the audience to consider, it is critical to examine more details to discover the actual significance of the context of the female in-laws in the Royal Family and how the British press affects their lives.

## Literature Review

My criticism's overarching theme on the media framing royalty will be compared to rhetorical analysis using pre-existing literature. According to Janice Hocker Rushing, "so many texts are chosen to dominate and deceive their audiences in an almost infinite spectrum of shades, especially of the more self-righteous sort, are widespread among critics. In those relatively few cases in which a text manages to subvert dominance structures, the feeling may be exuberance, but again of the self-righteous kind" (Rushing 3). The rhetorical frameworks that I will represent are Sonia Foss's visual rhetoric and feminist analysis.

### **The Rhetoric of Visual Analysis**

Valerie Peterson notes, "an image is a complex of visual elements and relationships which are (already) "made out" to be something by the individuals who encounter them. We don't just 'see' but have to learn *how* to see and *what to see*" (Peterson 22). Visual rhetoric is all about the image that shapes our minds into understanding the fundamental aspect an image brings. Fatma Nazli Köksal simplifies, "An image, in its simplest definition, is an indicator that can assume a wide variety of structures including a photograph, movie, scene from a video clip, or an artwork" (Köksal 36). She relates visual rhetoric to Roland Barthes with the symbolism explained by Barthes can be formed using imagery tools to understand the study of visuals. Sonja Foss's theory of visual rhetoric is about how rhetorical critics can put the components of images interpreted to images that have already been perceived during the seeing process by viewers. "The apparent importance of visuals in our daily lives can inform us on the uses of studying rhetoric to examine the effects and functions of visual media on societies in general" (Köksal 37). When we visualize the importance of our eyes, we can see those rhetorical terms come into the picture more clearly.

Sonia Foss's visual rhetoric theory creates the analysis of images for critics to grasp three unique ways fully. Köksal and İnatçı explain, "the focus of the first phase is on the function of images and the simple physical aspect of the visual elements, where size, materials employed, and other significant physical features become crucial" (38). The primary premise underlying Foss's rhetorical schema is that a picture is created to perform specific roles, and the rhetorical assessment of images is based on this. Peterson goes along with these stages Foss by stating, "Foss makes use of these arts vocabularies, it does so only after identifying the image and its function and only uses them to assess how well the image communicates the function because these elements are what make up the image in the first place" (26).

Valerie Peterson understands that "critics discover how visual elements communicate identity, meaning, and culture to the people who see and make sense of them" (27). Likewise, Köksal and İnatçı comprehend the interpretation of vision by noting, "knowledge brings vision, and what we mean by vision here does not only refer to a biological or physical function: the vision we stated here has to do with mental thinking and processes of perception" (41).

These two perspectives of the rhetorical criticism of visual and feminist analysis come together to create meaning when we glance at a picture's femineity. We see femineity through women's fashion, style, and appearance. These two perspectives can be paired well since when feminism is studied, we can use visual rhetoric techniques to understand women in the media.

### **The Rhetoric Feminist Analysis**

Suzu D'Enbeau notes, "Language speaks the world and the woman into being, into existence, and into a process that is flexible, fluid, and radically feminine" (19). D'Enbeau studies the perspectives of radical feminist philosopher Mary Daly by comprehending language as a dialectic, transformational tool for creating a profoundly transformed world for women. Bonnie Dow states, "feminist rhetoric - like all rhetoric - has always operated in a variety of

overlapping contexts and selecting which to feature or foreground in a critical act is an inventive choice that carries consequences for our conclusions” (71). D’Enbeau mentions one example of a popular context that feminist critics have studied. “Many feminist scholars have demonstrated the influence and impact of women’s magazines on how women’s identities are constructed in a patriarchal society because it is agreed that magazines “help to shape both a woman’s view of herself and society’s view of her” (D’Enbeau 21). Today, viewing culture in magazines and other media channels fulfills the feminist principle of reflective practice and place feminist researchers in positions to advocate for social change.

Bonnie Dow explains the early white radical feminists by stating, “The white feminists’ choice was as rhetorical as it was identity-based. Yet radical women of color during the same period “experienced a deep race-based loyalty to their male counterparts, a factor that limited their rhetorical affiliation with white feminists (against whom they measured their relative deprivation, as well as their motivation to reject their movements or origin, despite the sexism they experience there” (66) Dow, explains that feminism has been in occurrence through the years with the first, second, and the approaching third wave of feminism we see in society. D’Enbeau states, “Radical feminism allows women to disturb and disrupt the discourses over which men have had a monopoly undermining the assumption that there is one, single, objective reality and highlighting the tensions and contradictions women face navigating the boundaries of multiple realities” (18). Feminist communication studies expose women’s oppression, allowing them to describe and reinterpret their lived experiences. “Multicultural anxiety functions as a context for feminists’ rhetorical reactions to the speech by Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman.” The speech’s importance to feminists within the tumult over racial difference and the challenges to “woman” as a “seamless, unified, largely undifferentiated category” that erupted in feminist circles beginning in the 1980s” (Dow 72). When Dow brings up Truth’s speech about true

womanhood, the first-wave feminists display the experiences of women and the effects it can cause regardless of race and ethnicity. Dow comments, “gender should be a central category of analysis in work that is considered feminist, and they lament the ways that third wave rhetors; emphasis on intersectionality - often posited as a corrective to the mythical “monolithic center” of second-wave feminism” (69).

In D’Enbeau’s study on feminism in the media can be described with foreground fashion being the “primary means by which phallographic fixers fix, tame, and train women for their own designs,” attempting to “destroy female consciousness, embedding contagious anxieties and cravings, trying to trap women in houses of correction” (D’Enbeau 24). Bow notes, “Second-wave feminism can short shrift ideas related to sex/gender, ironically replicating a sexist system in which women’s issues are considered of lesser importance than other issues” (69-70).

D’Enbeau mentions in her study, “Popular culture magazines such as *Bust* magazine situates in a new space that uses strategic humor as a form of resistance and control, advocates the power of language as leading to power against social control, and is built upon a solid, yet contestable, feminine and feminist foundation” (29). Concerning rhetorical critics Dow notes, “rhetorical critics care about audiences in their specificity, they can refuse the invitations of discourse, not to mention that discourses themselves constitute some audiences while misrecognizing and erasing others. Rhetorical critics, especially feminist ones, recognize that rhetoric is a political practice and performance through which power ebbs and flows” (67). All the analyses advance the purpose of feminist rhetorical criticism: clarifying the many symbolic techniques that make women/gender/feminism and diversity mean in the constant variable situations in which they operate in our society as women.

## **Approach**

Sonja Foss's theory of visual rhetoric reminds us, "men look at women, while women watch themselves being looked at" (Rushing 3). As a result, when women are constantly being seen on screens or on paper in the media, being seen by others comes before living for oneself. For example, the royal family is known for the media always being in the lens frames and rhetorically in the frame, especially the females in the royal family, for the world to glance at and admire. By analyzing the rhetorical frames of visual rhetoric and feminist analysis, we can see that both theories can merge into the aid of women being treated harshly by the media to reveal the analyzed elements. This framework is the best for the analysis at hand.

## **Analysis**

Being a princess of the royal family comes with no space for mistakes. People are watching every action from across the world. People assess the princess' based on what each one wears, which causes their support, and how the women style their hair, which is evident in how the media covers women as prominent people, despite their areas or degree of notoriety. The feminist criticism and Sonia Foss's visual rhetoric allow us to investigate how their lives are framed in and through media representations of Diana Spencer, Kate Middleton, and Meghan Markle through meaning in images and analyze the effects of the British media on their lives piece by piece.

In this essay, I contend that the British media system reproduced the same inspection and projected the same capacity of being that society affords ordinary women, especially being non-blood members of the royal family. Through feminist criticism, one can see feminists are concerned with rethinking gendered notions and gendered behaviors. I contend that Diana, Kate, and Meghan have experienced the regulations of being in the royal family. Using the visual

rhetoric method of images, we can be encouraged to analyze the purposes of a picture, its influence, and its symbolic value.

Delilah Gray describes Diana Spencer as unlike any Royal before her, and she demonstrated her true self in everything she did. She was a gentle soul and a passionately devoted mother. She was committed to making the selections for herself, her children, and the culture around her that she believed were correct, regardless of whether these were following palace traditions. If it was her charitable activities or maternal behaviors, the people admired her warmth and friendliness (Gray). But that wouldn't mean that every decision was quite good – either by the royal family members or by members of the press. Diana spoke about politics. The media regularly chastised her for her relief. For instance, the British media craved her picture at the hospital for children with AIDS. Diana wanted to assist everyone such as creating awareness about the problem of AIDS. She performed a radical move by holding hands with an AIDS patient, which was unusual. Even though there was so much disinformation that it was contagious, Diana chose to assist dispel by greeting AIDS units. The press reacted to her action and labeled her “rebellious” for it” (Gray).

Through the feminist criticism lens, feminist rhetorical researchers are resurrecting communication practices neglected or dismissed. For example, since Diana's prince was involved in an affair for most of their marriage, Diana sought a divorce and aftermath consequences against royal regulations (Gray). In her tell-all interview with BBC in her own home, she reveals to the world about Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowels, her bulimia issues, and the fear she faces due to the royal family's rigorous standards. Her most famous line, “Well, there were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded,” caused the media to have their story instantly.

Visual arguments such as demonstrations and displays convey the best or easiest messages to be presented visually. Diana is best known for her fashion trends ever since the media came into her life when she first started her relationship with Charles. Some of Diana's most cherished clothes were frequently considered problematic if she was wearing a strapless dress, such as the well-known black "revenge dress" following the release of Prince Charles' sensational tell-all interview. He confessed to cheating on Diana with Camilla Parker-Bowles (Gray). Although the Princess of Wales was willing to emulate new times and modern design, many believed she could be more conventional. Diana's acts were carefully examined, especially after her divorce. The media was obsessively interested in obtaining topless images of her. Then, after they captured the photos, they would post them all over the place to embarrass her (Gray). It only illustrates how Diana was never given any privacy, which led to the sadder aspects of her narrative.

Even while Diana typically avoided seeking court action against obnoxious photographers, the paparazzi's relentless pursuit of her was undeniably distressing and humiliating. In the year leading up to her death, she would progressively approach severely of her most zealous pursuers, notably yelling at one of them, "You make my life hell!" (Samuelson). Some of her more tenacious stalkers even dubbed her emotional encounters "loon attacks" and cruelly compared and contrasted the occasions they had been "looned." A harsher type of loon attack was Diana standing motionless, tears coming from her eyes, giving the silent treatment (Samuelson). This shows the term intersectionality from feminist criticism, meaning that we exist at various crossroads influence how we live. When Diana passed away in a vehicle collision, jurors concluded at her inquiry that she was "wrongfully slain" by both their chauffeur's reckless driving and the paparazzi trailing her, which served as a wake-up call for the British press (Samuelson). According to a Gallup survey taken in 1997, 43 percent of the British

people thought photographers were “very” accountable for the deadly crash, while 33 percent held the chauffeur equally responsible (Samuelson).

The royals have kept their promise by constantly fighting for their privacy (Samuelson). It was an immense tragedy that the two princes were seasoning as a fair game. There was a new generation of reporters, and they had not learned any lessons from Diana’s death. Celebrity news is still big business, and Diana’s “dear lads” are still big favorites twenty years later (Samuelson). However, it’s not that simple to adapt to royal life and requires a lengthy process for Kate Middleton and Meghan Markle, the princesses of the royal family. Kate had to understand how to handle life in the spotlight from the ground up, which comes with just as much criticism as affection. Despite her sister-in-law, Meghan, who’d already worked as an actress for fifteen years, had her fair share of public relations issues (Warner and Rodriguez).

The Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, relates to her mother-in-law, Diana, with adjusting to the strict royal laws. Foss’s mode of visual rhetoric, archetypes, comes into the picture where the meanings are based on stories from popular culture that viewers are familiar with. Kate’s feud with the magazine *Tatler* expressed her feelings towards her workload compared to Meghan and Harry. Usually, Kensington Palace would keep quiet about this, but they issued a statement stating the piece was false and had misleading misrepresentations (Warner and Rodriguez). The feminist approach to redefining gender-based values and gendered conduct and the visual mode of rhetoric, symbolically substituting for something we’re familiar with, are closely related concepts. Kate was reportedly encouraged to have a hairstyle like Princess Diana and Queen Elizabeth did and put her hair up for her royal wedding to William. On the other hand, Kate had her heart set on having her hair down with beautiful flowing curls, which is her favorite style and William’s (Warner and Rodriguez).

The royal family has sent an anti-harassment warning to the press and media photographers every year since 2009, informing them of their privacy rights (Samuelson). Male identification in the feminist criticism represents in today's culture, men's activity is expected. There was a criminal charge of violating privacy and conspiracy when a French magazine released topless images of Kate while on vacation with William in 2012. The photographs were "all the more traumatic" due to William's mother's public struggle with invasive photographers. (Samuelson). The media takes and continues to taunt Kate and Meghan by ragging on any perceived insult from procedures to control their lives and public images. Meghan's status as a black, multiracial woman in the power of her story jeopardizes the monarchy's image as a stable entity and the media outlets that profit from it. Harassment allegations are frequently leveled against black women. These accusations can coexist with other, more vehement criticisms of the British media and a landscape of how the media perpetuates unfair and racist images of women (Biakolo). Intersectionality in feminist criticism represents disadvantages and inequalities among women of color. Touring of Central America and the Caribbean by Prince and Kate Middleton started when some were considering removing residual connections to bitter colonialist history; the cross-ocean offensive aimed to strengthen the United Kingdom's relations with its Commonwealth states in the area (Hoffman). However, when the couple visited the Akte 'il Ha cacao plantation in the town of Indian Creek, a property "owned and run by the Maquin family, who are relatives of the ancient Mayas who formerly farmed cacao in the region," they were met with opposition (Hoffman).

Relating to intersectionality, it's gendered and reeks of misogynoir (Biakolo). Meghan's obsession is both expected and harmful. It serves as a reminder for media channels to keep their most negative representation of women worldwide, especially those trying to take possession and manage their life stories. David Taylor, CEO of Back Grid photo agency, remarked, "I've seen a

lot of changes throughout my time in the sector. Now these legal rottweilers come at us and say things like ‘we want this,’ ‘we want that,’” (Biakolo) Meghan’s independence and desire to control her fate in public is ostensibly insulting to the British media and at least some members of the British people. Meghan and Harry sat with Oprah Winfrey and spoke about their exit from the British monarchy. The couple undoubtedly discusses their mistreatment by the British media and accuses the palace of “continuing to spread lies” about their relationship (Biakolo). Being used by the Buckingham Palace to peddle a wholly false narrative, a biracial, black American celebrity divorcee who dared to enter and then quit (in a spectacular way), the royal family is unacceptably intolerable (Biakolo). By demonstrating liberal feminism being male dominance in a society, Meghan appears to have done so while retaining her dignity and personality, which offends the sensitivities of a press that both enjoyed and despised her presence.

The visual rhetoric criticism by Sonia Foss and the feminist criticism is dominant in showing the ways the British media has taunted the royal family members such as Diana, Kate, and Meghan. This reveals that women shown in magazines, newspapers, and on screens worldwide should have a right and opportunity to stand up for themselves and others in the spotlight to have a private, free, happy life.

### Conclusion

Through this rhetorical analysis of Diana Spencer, Kate Middleton, and Meghan Markle, I have discovered through Sonia Foss's visual rhetoric and the rhetorical feminist analysis that the British media has been involved in these three women's lives, placing them in media frames. The visual rhetorical criticism has proven that a picture is a collection of visual features and connects the people who see it has already "made out" to be something. We must learn how to look and perceive, going beyond what is in front of our eyes. Princess Diana was known to be the people's princess due to her personality and generosity shown throughout her time as part of the royal family. Kate shares her stylist trends with the world as being the Duchess of Cambridge alongside her husband, Prince William, and children. Meghan is widely known for exiting the royal family due to her husband, Prince Harry, witnessing Diana struggle with being constantly in the media. This analysis proves that by analyzing using visual rhetoric and feminist analysis, we can see how the British press has taunted these three beautiful, inspiring women.

This research demonstrates that we should spend more time evaluating celebrities' opinions toward the press, constantly following them, and going deeper into what we're looking for. Female celebrities like Diana, Kate, and Meghan make an impact on all women in the world and do more than dress up in the most admiring outfits and wave at crowds. The analysis of these three women in the British media in this essay shows that there has been an issue between the press and celebrities, with many wrongful headlines and the importance of the messages going out to the public. It sparks a discussion on whether we genuinely understand the central idea of well-known, famous celebrities getting their best and worst image taken or if we are overlooking elements of that image that aren't visible to us. The Royal Family members and other famous individuals should be investigated further in the future because they are regular people on this

earth too, and their lives might be expressing a message that the viewers don't see on the covers of magazines and websites. They could have a good influence on our culture to which they are speaking.

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